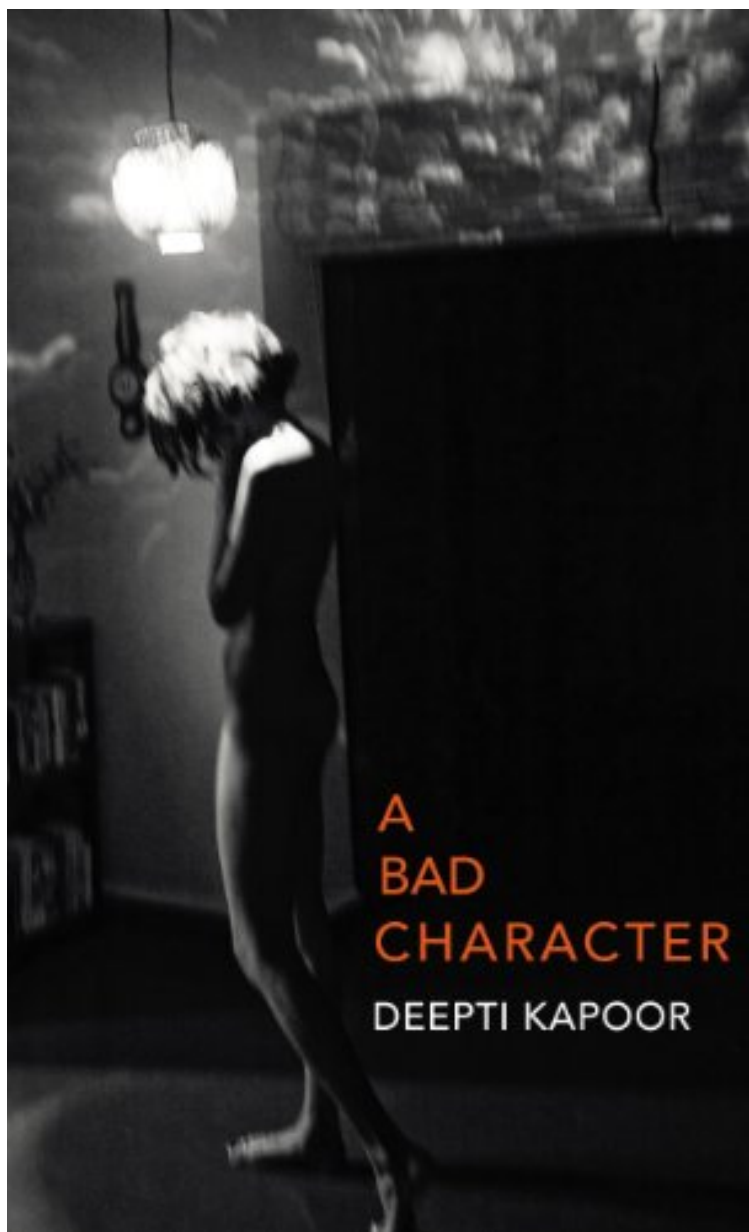


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A Bad Character



Par Deepti Kapoor
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurShortlisted for the 2015 Prix MdicisMy boyfriend died when I was twenty-one. His body was left lying broken in the highway out of Delhi while the sun rose in the desert to the east. I wasnt there, I never saw it. But plenty of others saw, in the trucks that passed by without stopping, and from the roadside dhaba where hed been drinking all night.Then they wrote about him in the paper. Twelve lines buried in the middle pages, one line standing out, the last one, in which a cop hed never met said to the reporter, He was known to us, he was a bad character.This is the story of Idha, a young woman who finds

escape from the arranged marriage and security that her middle-class world has to offer through a chance encounter with a charismatic, dangerous young man. She is quickly exposed to the thrilling, often illicit pleasures that both the city, Delhi, and her body can hold. But as the affair continues, and her double life deepens, her lovers increasingly unstable behaviour carries them past the point of no return, where grief, love and violence threaten to transform his madness into her own. A novel about female desire, *A Bad Character* shows us a Delhi we have not seen in fiction before: a city awash with violence, rage and corruption. Extrait My boyfriend died when I was twenty-one. His body was left lying broken on the highway out of Delhi while the sun rose in the desert to the east. I wasn't there, I never saw it. But plenty of others saw, in the trucks that passed by without stopping and from the roadside dhaba where he'd been drinking all night. Then they wrote about him in the paper. Twelve lines buried in the middle pages, one line standing out, the last one, in which a cop he'd never met said to the reporter, He was known to us, he was a bad character. It's a phrase they use sometimes, what some people still say. It's what they'll say about me too, when they know what I've done. Him and me, (long dead). Sitting in the caf in Khan Market the day we met, in April, when the indestructible heat was rising in the year, sinking in the day, the sun setting very red, sacrificing itself to the squat teeth of buildings stretching back round the stinking Yamuna into Uttar Pradesh. The city is a furnace on days like these, the aching heart of a cremation ground. But inside the caf you wouldn't know it; inside it's cool, the AC is on, the windows are politely shuttered, it could be any time of day in here; in here you could forget the city, its ceaseless noise, its endless quarry of people. You could feel safe. Only he's staring at me. Twenty and untouched. It's a sin. For twenty years I've been waiting for this one thing. Idha. In the mirror. I give myself a name, I wear it out. Lunar, serpentine, desirous. A charm that protects me. Revue de presse Searing, intoxicating The story of a young woman's hunger to be free. The New York Times Book A fiery, incandescent debut [that] artfully captures the perilous desires of a woman alone in New Delhi. Kapoor's novel smolders with submerged rage, pain, abandonment and erotic desire. . . . Promises great things to come. The Huffington Post A dark, hypnotic story. Hanya Yanagihara, author of *A Little Life* [Kapoor] writes with a keening, furious sorrow that rang in my ears well after I finished the book. Sam Sacks, *The Wall Street Journal* Marguerite Duras meets new India. Vogue.com Captivating . . . A Bad Character echoes Nabokov's *Lolita* with a story about the sexual initiation of a young woman, but offers a female perspective, one that doesn't pull any punches. . . . Literary voices like Kapoor's . . . are now more crucial than ever. The Rumpus Spellbinding: Here is a novel about sex, about drugs, about a city on the brink of awe-inspiring and terrible change. Nell Freudenberger, author of *The Newlyweds* India, once again. Its dark underbelly flashing images of poverty and squalor, corruption and drugs and, above all, battered lives Here's a young woman, named Deepti Kapoor, picking up where the others have left off, adding something here (a female protagonist), subtracting something there (sentiment), splashing into our lives like the beginning of the monsoon hitting Delhi's streets. And the irony of it all? By the last page you have to ask yourself who is the bad character of her title: the unnamed female narrator, or the man whose life she believes she has unpacked so carefully. Counterpunch A stylishly written, powerfully moving love story. . . . What *Twilight* in Delhi is to the 20th century Indian novel, *A Bad Character* is to the 21st: the essence of India's corrupt capital, brilliantly and darkly distilled. This is a remarkable debut from a major new talent. William Dalrymple, author of *The Last Mughal* Riveting . . . Kapoor's debut novel is a coming-of-age tale as complex, gritty and frankly terrifying as Delhi, the city that forms its backdrop. Bustle An intimate, raw exploration of [a] profound transformation. Booklist Sharply told. Largehearted Boy Haunting A beguiling, hallucinatory experience, at once unsettling and intimate. . . . *A Bad Character* is an astounding book: read it with the scent of diesel in your nostrils and red dust in your mouth. The New Indian Express A poignant and impressionistic portrait of the end of adolescence and a changing world. The Telegraph (London) Impressive in its . . . evocation of a dazzling, dangerous cityscape. Kirkus